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Personalities involved in suspected espionage activities

FSTA-9590/13  
18 JAN 1956

Name: X KODAMA, Yoshio (元 義 夫)

1. The information presented below was extracted from the Department of State Intelligence Report No. 6432-A "A Cross-section of the Extreme Right in Japan", dated 18 December 1953, pages 8 and 9. It has been quoted in toto in lieu of referencing because all addressees of this Counterintelligence Summary do not hold the Department of State Report.

"One of the most notorious pre-World War II ultra-nationalists in Japan, the youthful Kodama Yoshio is widely reported to be active currently in behind-the-scenes rightist movements. Capable, influential, and daring, he had long and close connections with the military and right-wing governmental figures prior to and during World War II. A man of tremendous vitality and unlimited ambitions, he was arrested and imprisoned on various occasions in prewar years for involvement in assassination plots and other rightist activities. He was also busily engaged during the 1930's in organizing and directing various ultra-nationalist, pan-Asian societies. During World War II, he served as "procurement agent" for the military in Shanghai, and is widely rumored to have thereby amassed a fortune, which has been cashed away awaiting the time when it can be openly spent. He himself claims that any funds which he may have acquired have been largely spent in "philanthropic" enterprises. After Japan's surrender, he was one of the backers of the then newly-organized Liberal Party, and is believed to have maintained close relations with Hatoyama Ichiro. Since his release from Sugamo Prison in December 1948, rumors have connected him with a number of nationalistic movements and societies, and he is said to have enhanced his personal fortune through blackmarket speculations. At the present time, Kodama is reported to be working in close association with such other ultra-nationalist figures as Sasagawa Ryochi, Miura Gichi, Col. Tsuji Masanobu, and Fujii Yoshio, and is rumored to be a supporter of the Hatoyama faction of the Liberal Party which recently broke away from the parent organization to form a new party. He has written an autobiography which became a best-seller and has been translated into English under the title, I Was Defeated.

Kodama's career is as follows: Born February 18, 1911 in Yasuki, Fukushima prefecture of a poor family though considered to be of Samurai class; received primary education in Seoul, Korea, and Japan, and attended night schools in Korea and Tokyo while working in factories, 1920-1926; is widely reading the social sciences, and is greatly influenced by leading Japanese nationalist theorists such as Okawa Shumei, Kasai Ryomei, and Inazumi Teisuke; joined Akao Bin's Kenkoku-Kai (National Construction Society), an anti-Communist, pan-Asianic group which was the forerunner to Akao's post-World War II Dai Nippon Aikoku-ka (Great Japan Patriotic Party); imprisoned for petitioning the Emperor in person for unemployment relief and against the formation of a leftist party, 1929-1930; became a leading member of the Kyushin Aikoku Kodoshu Seisaku (Radical

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Patriotic Laborers Federation), an amalgamation of Tsukui Tatsuo's rightist Kyushin Aikoku-to (Radical Patriotic Party) and labor elements formerly in the Kenkoku-kai, and the Zen Nippon Aikokusha Kyodo Toso Kyogikai (All Japan Patriots Struggle Council), an attempted merger by Okawa Shumei of all rightist groups in Japan, 1931; participated in the inaugural of the Nikkyo Zensei Tai (Japan Joint Struggle Vanguard), a group of selected youths organized by Okawa Shumei, from whose ranks came the majority of those later active in the Ketsu-seidan, the May 15, 1932, and Shimpei-tai assassination plots, 1931; imprisoned for having sent a dagger to Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke with the suggestion that Inoue commit suicide, 1931-1932; arrested in police round-up of rightists suspected of implication in the assassination of Inoue Junnosuke, a part of the Ketsu-seidan Incident, 1932; active in the Dai Nippon Seisan-to (Great Japan Production Party), an amalgamation of rightist groups under Uchida Ryohel; travelled to Manchuria as representative of the Dai Nippon Seisan-to, and was in contact with Kasaki Ryomei, a leading exponent of Japanese expansion in China, 1932; upon his return to Japan, founded the Dokuritu Seinensha (Independent Youths Society), based upon Kasaki's principles, with a few other young ultra-nationalists, including Toyama Hidezo, imprisoned for plotting to assassinate the Genro (elder statesmen, advisers to the Emperor), October 1932-April 1937; active in the Nippon Juku (Japan Institute), composed of disciples of Imazumi Teisuke, and the Dai Asia Kensetsu-kai (Great Asia Establishment Society), founded by the Foreign Office's Information Bureau, 1937; organized the Taishi Mondai Kai-ketsu Kokurin Domei (China Problems Settlement National League), which had semi-official backing from the Foreign Office, 1937; founded the Nicatsu-kai (February Society), successor to his Taishi Kokurin Domei, which was concerned with national politics as well as Japanese expansion in China, 1938; travelled to Central China, North China, and Inner Mongolia with the backing of the Foreign Office and his rightist organizations, 1938-1939; organized the Seisan Kantatsu Domei (Holy War Execution League), which propagandized Japanese expansionist activities in China, and the Seinen Nippon Undo (Japan Youth Movement) as a successor to his Nicatsu-kai and which emphasized the role of youth as the main force in the reconstruction of Japan, 1938-1939; sent to China as a non-official member of the Army General Staff, charged with guarding Wang Ching-wei on his journey from Hong Kong to Shanghai; made frequent trips between Japan and China for the Army and Foreign Office, 1939; reorganized his Seinen Nippon Undo under the name Rise Asia Youth Movement to include youths of Manchuria and China, and published the magazine Taishi Justice, 1939; conferred with Lt. Gen. Ishihara Kenji, and through him met Gen.

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Tsuji Masanobu, then in Charge of the Army's "thought" activities in Shanghai, 1940; worked with Tsuji, as an unofficial employee of the Army GHQ in China, and as a representative of Ishihara's Toe Renrei (East Asia League), 1940; chief of the Far Eastern Section of Sasagawa Ryoichi's Kokusui Teishu-to (National Essence Party) and manager of the Nipponshugi Seinen Kai (Japanese Youth Council), an attempted merger of nationalist groups to propagate Japanism throughout the world which was violently anti-American, 1941; a Director of the Dai Nippon Kwa Dorei (Great Japan Rise Asia League), an amalgamation of 61 societies concerned with Japanese activities overseas, and a leader of Hachiratsu-kai (August Society), composed of nationalist leaders, 1941; during the first years of World War II, organized and operated a purchasing agency in Shanghai for the Japanese Naval Air Forces which involved handling large sums for the Naval Air Forces, and later for the other services; (his procurement organization was officially called the Kodama Kikan (Kodama Organ), and served also as an intelligence agency of the Japanese Government), 1941-1943; unsuccessful Diet candidate in April 1942 elections; manager of the rightist newspaper Yasato Shimbun following the death of its proprietor, his old friend Iwata Fumio, November 1943; assigned duty by Naval Air Forces of acquiring and operating mines in Japan producing strategic metals such as tungsten and molybdenum, 1944-1945; assigned by the Navy to direct various official chores, such as repairing airfields, salvaging scrap, and electrolyzing salt, during the last months of World War II; member of Cabinet Advisory Council, Higashikuni Cabinet, August 1945 (post obtained through high official connections, including General Ishihara); began to organize a new, "democratic-style" political party, the Nippon Kokumin-to (Japan Peoples Party), October-November 1945; interned in Sugamo Prison, but not indicted, as a Class "A" war crimes suspect, January 1946-December 1948; barred from official political activities as a Class "A" purgee, December 1948 to end of occupation.

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